Export of Tobacco from Andhra Pradesh

*297. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russia and other former USSR countries have stopped buying tobacco from Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for decline in purchases of Andhra tobacco;

(c) whether any trade delegation has been sent to Russia and the former USSR States to promote Andhra tobacco; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Issue of exports of tobacco to Russia was discussed during the fourth meeting of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation in its meeting held in New Delhi on 11-12 December, 1997 wherein Russian side intimated that Association of Tobacco Manufacturers of Russia would be the nodal agency for imports of tobacco from India.

Embargo on Import of Shrimps.

*298. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has ruled the US embargo on import of shrimps from India on environmental grounds as untenable;

(b) if so, the extent of loss in exports of shrimps caused by such embargo, so far; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken to boost production and export of shrimps, involving not only big but also small produces as well?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. The Dispute Settlement Panel report in this regard has not yet been adopted by the Dispute Settlement Body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

(b) The US embargo on import of shrimps from India except the shrimps harvested by artisanal means or sourced from aquaculture, came into effect on 1.5.1996. The shrimp exports to USA during the last three years have been as follows:—

Year	Quantity (Metric Ton)	Value (Rs. Crore)
1995-96	16,556	290.12
1996-97	16,467	335.69
1997-98	19,723	467.71

(c) The following steps have been taken and are being taken to boost the production and export of shrimps:—

(i) Production of aquaculture shrimps is encouraged by Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) by extending subsidies for the development of new acquaculture farms and shrimp hatcheries.

(ii) With a view to increase production and control diseases, MPEDA extends necessary guidance and training to the aquaculture farmers on scientific methods for sustainable ecofriendly aquaculture.

(iii) MPEDA has procured Polymerase Chain Reaction machines and Dot Blot Diagnostic kits for testing so that only virus free mother brooders and seedlings are supplied to the shrimp hatcheries and aquaculture farms respectively.

(iv) Various schemes are being implemented through MPEDA for helping the fishery product processing units to produce quality fish and fishery products for exports namely schemes for establishment of captive peeling sheds, cold storages, mini laboratories,

generator sets, flake/chip/tube ice making machines, individual quick freezing (IQF) units and for procurement of refrigerated trucks, equipment and machinery for modernisation and for export of value added products etc.

(v) Fish insulation boxes were supplied to fishermen through MPEDA at a subsidy for preserving the quality of shrimps.

(vi) The threshold limit for zero import duty under export promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme has been reduced from the earlier Rs. 20.00 crores to Rs. 1 crore for the import of essential machinery and equipment by the fishery product processing units.

(vii) The Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for export of marine products have been notified.

Donations by SAIL

*299. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited has given donations to various social organisations of the country during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details of the donations given to each organisation during this period;

(c) whether many social and voluntary organisations had made requests to the Steel Authority of India Limited for donations during the said period;

(d) if so, the names of such organ tions; and

(e) the reasons for accepting the quests of various organisations and t total amount given as donations to var ous organisations upto March, 1995?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The year-wise details of the donations given to each organisation during the last three years, by the SAIL Board, are given in the Statement. (*See* below)

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Requests for donation are also received from time to time from various organisations, by various functionaries of SAIL at different locations. There is no mechanism for maintaining exhaustive centralised record of such requests. Such requests are examined and disposed of at Corporate/Plant/Unit level.

(e) SAIL being one of the largest public sector undertakings is very often approached for donations etc. Accordingly, it considers requests from time to time and approves grants for donation for undertaking welfare/developmental/construction works for medical, educational, cultural and sports promotion activities, etc.

The total amount given as donations to various organisations from April, 1992 to March, 1995 was Rs. 472.33 lakhs.

Statement

List of the Organisations approved donations by the SAIL Board during the Period 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98

S.No.	Agency	Amount (Rs. in Lakhs)
	1995-96	
1.	Parliament Secretariat (for a statue of Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi)	12.00*
2.	Rohiteshwar Saikia Memorial Indoor Stadium, Construction Committee, Nazira, Distt. Sibsagar, Assam	25.00